

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY DOT/TPI-42:BARAMUNDO

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652; N/A

TAGS: ETRN, TECH, UR

SUBJECT: US-USSR TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT - RAIL TRANSPORT
WORKING GROUP - EXCHANGE OF TIES AND AUTOMATIC COUPLER
CEREMONY - (05.03)

REF: (A) STATE 017524; (B) MOSCOW 975; (C) MOSCOW 959 (D)
MOSCOW 1109; (E) MOSCOW 1250

1. CEREMONY OCCURRED ON JANUARY 26 AS PLANNED (REF A).
IT WAS MARRED BY (A) DIFFICULTY IN GETTING SOVIET EMBASSY
AND NEW YORK OFFICIALS TO BELIEVE MOSCOW HAD CHANGED DATE
FROM 27TH TO 26TH. AT DOT INSISTENCE, VORONTSOV FINALLY
ORDERED CEREMONY BE HELD ON 26TH. DURING RAMUNDO
DISCUSSIONS WITH CAPTAIN BELYAKOV LATTER CONFIRMED THAT
HIS ORDERS HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN CHANGED, AND THAT
STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR POLESSK TO SPEND TWO DAYS IN NEW YORK.
HEAVY DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET EMBASSY AND MORINFLOT CAUSED
BY REPORT CONTAINED REF B APPARENTLY UNNECESSARY AND DOT
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WISHES EMBASSY TO ASCERTAIN REASON FOR CONFUSION CONCERNING

DATE; (B) HEAVY FOG ON 26TH CAUSED POLESSK TO RUN AGROUND
IN PORT ELIZABETH NECESSITATING ON AGAIN OFF AGAIN
SCHEDULING CO;EDY WHICH LOST PRESS COVERAGE FOR CEREMONY;
AND (C) DESPITE PROMISES TO ATTEND AND REQUEST CONTAINED

REFS C, NO SOVIET EMBASSY OR MORINFLOT REPRESENTATIVE
ATTENDED CEREMONY. (SMIRNOV WAS IN NEW YORK ON JAN 26
AT SOVIET MISSION INSTEAD OF SHIPSIDE AT PORT ELIZABETH
BECAUSE OF GROUNDING REPORT.)

2. ON PLUS SIDE, CAPTAIN BELYAKOV AND CREW RECEIVED US
GROUP GRACIOUSLY ALBEIT AT FIRST HE WAS PREOCCUPIED
WITH EXPLAINING TO PORT OFFICIALS HOW SHIP RAN AGROUND.
HE WAS NOT TOO WELL BRIEFED ON SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE OF
EVENT ALTHOUGH HIS GOOD NATURE AND WARM HOSPITALITY MADE
THIS UNNOTICEABLE TO PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES.
CHAMPAGNE, VODKA AND SOME HORS D'OEUVRES MADE THE EVENT
A "SUCCESS" FOR THEM. AS FOR THE THREE GOVERNMENTAL
OFFICIALS INVOLVED, IT SEEMED THAT THE SOVIET PERFORMANCE
FELL SOMEWHAT SHORT OF EXPECTATION.

3. EMBASSY REQUESTED BRIEF LEVTONOV ON FOREGOING AND
ADVISE HIM THAT WHILE DOT APPRECIATIVE OF SHIPMENT
ARRANGEMENTS, IT REGRETS THAT DESIRED EFFECT OF
"CEREMONY" AND PRESS COVERAGE WAS NOT ATTAINED. FURTHER,
DOT WOULD HOPE THAT IN ANY FUTURE EFFORTS OF THIS TYPE,
OFFICIAL SOVIET PRESENCE AND MORE ACCURATE INFORMATION
ON TIMING BE ASSURED. KISSINGER

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